# THE DANCE OF NERULL

## A One-Round Mini D&D LIVING GREYHAWK<sup>®</sup> Perrenland Regional Adventure Version 2.1

## Round 1

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FOR MATURE PLAYERS ONLY

Welcome to Schwartzenbruin the city of pleasures, on the coldest day of the year the famous festival called the Dance of Nerull has begun, tourists form all over have come to witness the macabre events of the festival, for some tourists the events can become very personal indeed...

ALTHOUGH THIS ADVENTURE WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN FOR HIGHER APLs, THE PERRENLAND TRIAD CURRENTLY SANCTIONS THIS SCENARIO TO BE PLAYED <u>ONLY</u> BY 1<sup>st</sup> LEVEL CHARACTERS AT APL 2.

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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A three-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to two hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

## Preparation

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least three players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than six players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rulebooks during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the Dungeon Master's Guide when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the Monster Manual when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

## Scoring

There is no scoring in a mini-scenario unless it is part of a specific convention or game day (see your organisers).

## **About Mini-Scenarios**

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK regional miniscenario. Mini-scenarios are different from regular scenarios in that they generally only have 3-4 encounters (as opposed to 6-7 in a regular scenario). A mini-scenario is meant to be played in a 2-3 hour timeslot; whereas a regular scenario takes between 4-5 hours. When you play miniscenarios, it is expected that you only receive *half* regular rates of XP and GP. This is calculated into the rewards section at the end of the mini-scenario.

As a LIVING adventure it is expected that players bring their own characters with them. It players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, and a character sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create on. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin. Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK *Gazetteer*.

## Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportioned to the average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.

2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely being war horses, dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (i.e. animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts, etc) use the following chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

CR	1	2	3	4
1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
1	1	1	2	3
2	2	3	4	5
3	3	4	5	6
4	4	5	6	7

3. Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure – round up.

4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

By following these four steps, you will have determined the APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs will face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL this adventure is being played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the face that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

**Note:** LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Three or four, or sometimes even five 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters may find difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1 there are three things that you can do to help even the score.

- 1. Attempt to create a table of six 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
- 2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

## Time Units and Upkeep

This is a mini one-round Regional adventure, set in Perrenland. Characters native to Perrenland pay **One Time Unit** for this scenario, all others pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per round. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per round. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per round.

## INTRODUCTION AND PLAYERS HANDOUT NUMBER 1

Today is the festival called "The Dance of Nerull" also known as "The Hands Dance", or simply the Dance. The Dance is one of Perrenlands oldest festivals and has been part of the cultural calendar of the city of Schwartzenbruin for longer than written records have been kept. The nature of the festival often leaves visitors to the country a little perplexed. How can a good society so openly celebrate a ritual to a god so dark and evil? In explanation, they mostly get simply a wry smile, a shake of the head, and comments like "Dumkoff Ootlanders".

The nature of the festival is thus. Every year on the last day of Coldeven one speaker from the Old Kerk is chosen by divine oracle to take on the mantle of an individual known as "The Hand of Nerull". Though the priest's identity is often known, everyone treats him or her as an anonymous person. In fact to be quite correct "if" the person needs to be referred to at all whilst acting as the "Hand" then said reference is as one who has departed to another place. It is not deemed appropriate or polite to ever reveal any knowledge that one knows whom was acting as the "Hand". This is because Nerull is the Flan god of Death, Darkness and Evil. Worship of him is considered heretical and diabolical in Perrenland, but the Old Kerk and indeed Perrenders in general still feel the need to placate him. This they do once a year with the Hands Dance.

The Hands Dance, is said to hearken back to the days of the Ur-Flanne, an ancient Flan empire of the Quaglands, and beyond. It is said that the Ur-Flanne held many dark gods in high honor and Nerull as one of their supreme gods, and they openly worshipped him. For the Ur-Flanne, according to Perrendland's intelligencia, had no sense of good or evil being barbaric and uncouth. Yet, some traditions are best not forgotten no matter how much time has passed, lest the dark god's fury be unleashed on this the coldest, darkest day of the year. The festival is based around the chosen "Hand of Nerull" performing the only duty that office holds within the Old Kerk. The singular duty of the office is the execution of Perrenlands most

heinous criminals called the Kust. Kust is an old Flan word that roughly translates as both accursed and evil, and on this day they are condemned to hell.

The festival starts, as do most festivals with the donning of traditional costume, dance and a great deal of substance abuse. Everyone dresses for the occasion in long white shrouds, with leering skull masks. The fact that everyone has traditionally dressed incognito is said to have been the main cause over the centuries of the strengthening of Perrenlands old bloodlines with new blood, and couples locked together in wild embraces is not an uncommon sight on the streets of Schwartzenbruin during the festival. Some scholars, in fact, refer to the festival as being dualistic in that aspects of fertility and renewal are as prominent as aspects of passing and death. The quickening of many wombs and a high birth rate nine months after the festival seems to bear this out.

About mid-morning the Hand enters the city via the "Rund Huis" or main ceremonial gate with his grim procession of Kust guarded by the famous Bruinsgardt of Perrenland. Down the PlazDerGoot he will lead his flock make a turn past the Zee-Acadame onto Bakkerstrât. Here they will pass the famous drinking establishment Der Aldboot before going out through Deaths gate facing the lake. Along the beach the possession will go up the hill to Deaths Bluff the promontory that overlooks Bruinsbay. From here the Kust have one last journey to make, the plummet to the Paleen rock below.

The place of execution the "Paleen Rock" is a wide jagged lump of yellowish rock that rests below Deaths Bluff, the highest point on the cliffs of the city. The fall of exactly 237 feet onto the rock has never failed to kill one of the Kust, or indeed anyone else. From the cliff each of the Kust is led by the Hand of Nerull, cursed for their crimes for a final time and then thrown to their death with the cheers of the crowd. Below, the Hands Helpers bear witness to the executions. No one ever touches the Paleen Rock during this festival.

So, thousands of people from across Perrenland brave the cold weather and converge upon Schwartzenbruin filling its taverns, Clanhuis and inn's to the bursting point. Many also, who are more grim of mood, come to see justice done. This year the Dance is going to be especially important as the infamous rampager Malgan of Veluna is to be executed. This foreigner has been convicted by the highest court in the land, that of the Hand of Allitur, and condemned as Kust. His rampage of murder, rape and robbery through the Quaglands as far north as the city of Traft has affected many families. These families with their extended kin have converged upon Schwartzenbruin in numbers almost without precedent to see the Hand of Nerull perform his duty.

## **Starting This Mini-scenario**

Give all the players the introduction (**Handout 1**) to read before play starts, or you can even post it up somewhere public for potential players to read. They should, however, have read the introduction before play starts. It may be advisable to allow 10 minutes at the start of play for PC to field question relating to the introduction. Any cultural information that may be common knowledge should be given out with an appropriate skill roll DC10.

## **Encounter One The Hands Dance**

**DMs NOTE:** The PCs are not together at this point (**play out this encounter for each individual separately**), if they are an adventuring party simply state that they have drifted apart during the celebrations.

Read or paraphrase this section out load to the players then move to individual responses

For whatever reason, you find yourself in Schwartzenbruin and tied up with the festival. Over your normal clothing you have thrown a white sheet with holes cut out for your eyes and mouth and from a street vendor you brought a leering skull like mask for a copper piece. Thus with little effort, suddenly you are but one more anonymous member of the many thousand strong crowd that have filled the streets of Schwartzenbruin surrounding the PlazaDerGoot. From street vendors, also anonymously dressed, all manner of food, wine and ale is available for low prices, as a result many of the revelers have already reached a state of severe intoxication. Musicians dressed in the most elaborate costumes; skeletons, devils and grim reapers are playing on most street corners. The blaring of horns, flutes and strong voices combined with the deep thumping of drums has created so much noise that everyone is shouting to be heard. Despite this behind you the noise is beginning to intensify as around you the crowd begins throw itself into a wild frenzied dance, the dance has begun, what do you do?

Such an open-ended question can draw any type of response; cope as best you can, have some fun if necessary.

Some of the more common responses are listed below

**Any** PC who looks behind can make a spot check DC10 to see the following.

Coming down the street is the strangest procession you have ever seen. A tall figure dress all in black, bemasked as death and bearing a huge scythe has caused the crowd to fall back around him, even in their frenzied dance. This is obviously the Hand of Nerull, behind him walks a long line of chained men and women, the Kust, maybe thirty in all. They are bare-footed and dressed in scarlet robes. As they shuffle down the street the frenzied dancers swell towards them in strangely rhythmically waves wailing and cursing them for their crimes. The majority of the Kust are obviously terrified by these events and the perception that their fate is sealed, a couple of them leer and curse back at the crowd, one is near manic in this pursuit. Guarding them are about two dozen guards dressed in bronzed platemail, their helmets are shaped to look like the open muzzle of a bear and a thick bear pelt with teeth and ears hangs from the top of this helmet cascading part-way down their back. They are keeping the crowd back with long spears; longswords hang at their sides.

**DMs NOTE:** The manic Kust is the rampager Malgan of Veluna.

**Any** PC who decides to join the dance can see nothing until the Hand of Nerull stands before them (see below).

**Any** player who asks about the guards can make a knowledge (history) DC10 check if they possess the skill to find out that the following

The Guards are the famous Bruinsgardt of Schwartzenbruin; they are drawn from the sacred clan called the Bruinsmenn. The Bruinsmenn claim to be the original inhabitants of the Old City, harking back to the time when the Old City was no more than a village and where animist traditions had them worshipping the Bruin or Bear, their historical totem. They guard the City of Schwartzenbruin and technically the area about 5 square miles around it. They are not one of the eight clans of Perrenland but instead belong to a sacred ninth clan. This clan is charged with protecting Perrenlands most holy and culturally significant of sights, the complex of the Old Kerk, the Fortress of Dian and the Seat of the Voormann, all three being located in the city of Schwartzenbruin. To do this the Bruinsgardt was formed.

**Any** PC who decides to blend into the crowd, hide etc. will see nothing until they either try to look (see above) or the Hand of Nerull stands before them.

**DM NOTEs:** It must be stressed that the PCs may not know each other, they are all individuals in the crowd at this point. Regardless of what they do, they have all been chosen by fate this day to be the Helpers of Nerull and the Hand as he marches past each of them will pause and choose them one by one, he will seek them out if they are in bizarre places.

For example if a PC tries to stay at the back of the crowd the crowd will suddenly part for the Hand and they will still be beckoned. They could be up on a building or peeking out from a window, they might be in a tavern or shop, and the Hand will still find them and summon them to task. In really extreme circumstances if a PC uses magic to remain hidden they may miss out on the rest of the scenario.

## When a PC is located read the following :

Suddenly the hand of Nerull stands before you as if by magic. If that is a mask of death he is wearing then the articulation of the jaw as it speaks is very clever, but you can hear now sound, for a moment a shudder of fear wracks your body and you feel like fleeing. However, before you can do so, his hand raises towards you and beckons you to follow. A somber voice in your head says the following.

#### "Come, my servant, we have work this day to do. Thirty three Kust await their fate, and you will see that it comes true."

Some PCs may balk at this; others will leap to it with relish. Regardless all of them are subsequently compelled as per the geas/quest spell from page 208 of the Players Handbook, but with the following twists

- The subject cannot refuse to follow the Hand of Nerull or any direct instructions from him; they react automatically to commands, woodenly and with horror if they resist. Otherwise they may act, talk and respond normally.
- The subject is filled with negative energy and will inflict 1d6 points of negative energy damage on any successful touch attack upon a living creature. The player does not know this fact until the first time they touch someone, but not each other or the Hand of Nerull. Others, however, know it instinctively. The people in the crowd now will scatter if necessary to avoid a PC as if they had the plague, giving them at all times a 5-10ft berth.

The subject gains damage resistance of 5/+1.

- The subjects sight is altered in a subtle way, were ever they look they can also *detect life* continuously as per the in text description of this ability.
- Paladins loose all their divine abilities until the end of the scenario but will not have to atone for any actions they commit in this scenario in order to regain them.
- Clerics loose all access to their normal domain spells and domain abilities including any memorized domain spells. These are replaced with the following spells until the end of the scenario, as well as the domain effects of the death domain. These changes the cleric is aware of

1st level spell: Cause Fear. 2nd level spell: Death Knell. 3rd level spell: Nondetection 4th level spell: Confusion All effects of this geas disappear at the end of the scenario except for one. Each PC who survives the scenario has the equivalent of a Negative Energy Protection at 20th level. It will dissipate the first time it is used to negate any form of negative energy damage or effect. It is, otherwise, permanent until discharged.

## Hand to each of the Players Handout Number 2 as soon as they are chosen.

**DMs NOTE:** As events unfold it may be wise to inform the players (as often as needed) if they begin to reveal themselves that to have ones identity revealed in this situation is not good. If any PC does, during the course of play after they have been chosen as one of the "Hands Helpers", reveal their ID publicly, they are cursed with a -2 reaction modifier in all Charisma based skill check within Perrenland. This can only be removed once an atonement is successfully sought from the Old Kerk at cost price.

Once all the PCs have been summoned for service, move to **Encounter 2**.

## Encounter Two Death's March

#### IMPLEMENT THIS WITH THE PLAYERS NOW

Due to circumstances the players will not be wearing all their gear. They can have their primary weapon only so long as it is not a missile weapon, no armor and no large bulky items such as lanterns, rope, backpacks etc. They can have their belt pouches, money and clothes; they are out for a festival not a campaign. This will make the challenges of the scenario a little more interesting. Only A barbarian or a dwarf or half-orc can ignore this ruling. All weapons must have Peace knots as well as per appendix 3 of this scenario.

**DMs NOTE: If** any PC attempts to address any of the Kust at any stage, they will be instantly called to **SILENCE!** By the booming voice of the Hand of Nerull and will be able to speak no more until the end of the scenario.

*Read or paraphrase the following to kick start this encounter* 

The situation has become decidedly surreal. You have joined the procession and have been walking now for some minutes down the PlazaDerGoot. Directly ahead of you the Hand of Nerull is walking, behind you the possession of Kust and Bruinsgardt follow, around you the crowd is dancing wildly and screaming at the Kust. Eventually the possession turns down Bakersradt, a long and popular street of the city, as you pass the famous Mordenkainens House of Schocolate make a spot check (DC12).

Any PC who succeeds sees the following.

Out of the crowd a young pretty woman steps deftly past one of the guards his spear lowering to late to block her, with a scream she launches herself at one of the Kust just behind you, is that a knife in her hand?

Any PC can at this stage react.

The young woman is Anka Jors (Com 0, 1hp). She is the aggrieved fiancée of Ortha Vosser who was killed by the rampager Malgan of Veluna, who she is now "hell bent" on killing herself. This may well be a "grave" mistake.

If any PC moves to stop her and tries to grapple, restrain or touch her then she will fall subject to their negative energy touch and die. The PC(s) will get the following information in such an event.

As you touch/grapple/restrain the young woman, she screams in a manner that sets your nerves on edge, you feel the scream enter into the very fabric of your being, and realize that her scream is actually silent. Her previously white shimmering aura begins to turn dull gray then black as she falls to the ground a lifeless corpse. Next to you the Kust she was trying to attack says the following to you, he has a manic gleam in his eyes, "Malgan thanks you stranger, perhaps you would be so kind to save me later? He looks at the dead woman "such a pretty thing too, maybe we could have shared her?"

At this point the Hand of Nerull appears, standing over the dead woman his voice booms across all the noise as he address the crowd.

"Beware, mortals none have rights to those that have been sworn to me, her fate is now sealed and for an eternity she will be mine, raise not your hand in anger against the Kust less you join them, they belong to me. Come my helpers."

The Hand will continue on his way, as will the PCs leaving the young woman's body behind.

If the PCs do nothing then the hand of Nerull will intervene with the same results, the woman will still be dead and he will still address the crowd.

## Encounter Three At the Paleen Rock

For the last hour or so you have been standing at the foot of the Paleen rock. During this time you have born witness to 32 ritual cursing and 32 ritual executions as above you the Hand of Nerull has gone about his business to the cheers of the crowd behind him. Some of you have emptied your stomach contents long ago. The Paleen Rock is now littered with emaciated corpses, the blood from the wounds that were inflicted as they crashed upon it jagged teeth has been mostly absorbed by the rock itself. It now radiates a strong black aura, yet some blood has also trickled off the rock onto the sand of the beach upon which you stand.

Out in the Bay, behind you, several score boats full of spectators add to the bizarre near carnival like nature of the corpses as they plummet screaming to their deaths. Now only 1 Kust remains, Malgin of Veluna, as you watch on the Hand Of Nerull begins to curse him, suddenly a red streak zips from the bay over your shoulders and with a roar the top of the cliff in engulfed by fire. When it clears a few seconds later you see that several of the Bruingardt are on fire, one in panic steps off the cliff and falls to his death on the rock. Malgin of Veluna now unguarded and seemingly unhurt suddenly leaps into action and runs straight off the cliff, for a second he drops straight towards the rock and sure death, but at the last moment his fall levels out.

With a precision that could only come form long practice he flies over your heads and onto the beach about 100 ft from you, he takes a second to look about and runs towards the small boat about 20ft form him (location B). Above the Hand of Nerull, his black robes ablaze screams in fury and his voice booms out to you all, "bring him back to me, or one of you will take his place."

## Put Map 1 on the table so that PCs can get their bearings.

### Malgin's Mistake

Well as far as escape plans go this was a pretty good one, except that Malgin has got the escape boat mixed up. He has ended his flight too early and run towards a boat that will not help him escape, it has been staved in by Kat to prevent any pursuers. Upon reaching the boat Malgin will curse loudly and begin to run down the beach if he can to escape pursuit. He is now correctly making for the right boat and for Kat. He will be intercepted by the guard at the end of the second round, and will employ his hold the line feat to make the spectacular disposal of the guard that is described below.

### Where Did That Fireball Come From?

The Fireball was cast by Malgin's lover and undiscovered partner in psychopathic style crimes, Katarinya or Kat for short. Kat has set up the escape of Malgin, employing a fireball and an improved invisibility from a scroll, leaving her with one Fireball up her sleeve to use against the guards on the tower of "deaths gate". A spot DC18 will reveal the rough location that the fireball must have originated from about 50ft behind the PCs.

Kat herself is still invisible running down the beach to the boat she has waiting at location C. This will take her 2 rounds running along the waters edge. She can be spotted by a PC with a spot check of 30 in the 2 rounds that she does this. Once at the boat she will quickly hit the guards on the tower with her spare fireball on the 3rd round, allowing PCs to spot her location with a DC18 spot. On the 4th round she will hit the closest PC to Malgin with her sleet storm spells to slow him/her /them down. She will not do this on any PC within 5ft of Malgin instead concentrating on the next closest. After that she will launch the boat. This will have the appearance of the boat moving by itself into the water the round after the PCs are hit by the sleet storm, if any of them can see (i.e. she is pushing it but invisible).

### Running On The Beach

All normal movement is halved due to the soft sands of the beach; unless a PC decides to run close to where the water laps against the shore (i.e. within 5ft) where movement will be normal, the sleet storm will half all movement again plus its other effects.

### The Guard

As Malgin is running off down the beach from the PCs a guard from deaths-gate will be on an intercept course. He charges Malgin attempting to run him through with his spear on the second round. Before he even attacks Malgin will hit him once killing him in the process and leave him unmoving on the sand. The guard has a spear, light crossbow, 10 bolts and a longsword for the PCs to use.

#### The Other Guards

Three other guards will begin firing their crossbows from the walls at Malgin at the very end of the 2nd round, regardless of weather there are PCs close by. As a result Kat will BBQ them with another Fireball on the third round, killing them all.

#### "I will Dimension door"

Using teleport, dimensional door and other extradimensional type magic. The city of Schwartzenbruin has artifact level protection against any form of extra-dimensional magic. This simulates the dimensional anchor spell in all locations within the city and to a half-mile radius beyond. Note: spells of this nature that are cast still use up the spell slot as if they had functioned normally.

### **Concluding Encounter 3 :**

The encounter should end with the recapture of Malgin and the capture or death of Kat. The Hand of Nerull will appear, still smoldering, the round after combat is concluded and will stabilize Malgin if he is dying. He will then with super-human strength drag him by an ankle all the way back up the beach and swinging him overhead several times will proceed to smash his brains out against the Paleen rock screaming the following

"No one escapes me, no one (splat), no one (splat), no one (final splat and discarding of lifeless/soulless corpse).

The guards will arrest Kat if she is still alive and she will be tried and condemned as Kust for next years ritual after a little holiday in Bathmorda the dread prison.

## Conclusion

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs

It is not long before you are surrounded by large group of Bruinsgardt, and several representatives of the Old Kerk. They quickly, for you own safety, escort you to the closest temple of the Old Kerk in the Vuurzpladtz. The crowd seems to have gone into a frenzy at the spectacular events and many are calling that you be revealed and treated as heroes. This the priests advise would not be a good thing. At the temple you treated kindly and any wounds you sustained are promptly cured.

Eventually outside the crowd dissipates and another priest arrives, a serious looking young man. He introduces himself as Reanulf and those of you with any local history quickly realise that this is the Voorshoalmann of the Old Kerk and the spiritual leader of the nation. He thanks you for assisting the prevention of a grave travesty and assures you that the effect of being a helper will soon fade, any Paladins or Clerics shocked by the day events are given absolution and atonement and recover promptly all their abilities. He informs you that one effect of being a helper he cannot undo is the favor of Nerull himself, and it is for him to decide (give players the cert, Favour of the hand of Nerull). He implores you to spend the night at the temple and takes his leave, with a final thanks and blessing.

### MALGIN AND KATS VITALS

### APL 2

Malgin of Veluna, male human, ex-Mnk1/Fgt3: CR4; medium-sized humanoid; HD 1d8+3d10+8; hp 31; Init.+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Imp Init); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 Wis); Atks +4 melee (1d6+2, fist)

SA Improved unarmed strike, flurry of blows; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5.

Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12

*Skills*: Balance +9, Climb +5, Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +7, Hide +6, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +4, Tumble +8; *Feats*: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Focus (fists)

Treasure : None

#### APL 4

Malgin of Veluna, male human, ex-Mnk4/Fgt4: CR8; medium-sized humanoid; HD 4d8+4d10+16; hp 55; Init.+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Imp Init); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 Wis); Atks +10/+5 melee (1d8+4, fist)

SA Improved unarmed strike, flurry of blows;

SD Deflect arrows; SQ Slow Fall 20ft,

Unarmored Speed 40ft, Still Mind; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +7.

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12

*Skills*: Balance +12, Climb +9, Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +10, Hide +9, Jump +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Spot +6, Tumble +11; *Feats*: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Focus (fists), Specialisation (fists).

Treasure : None

#### APL 6

Malgin of Veluna, male human, ex-Mnk7/Fgt4: CR11; medium-sized humanoid; HD 7d8+4d10+22; hp 74; Init.+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Imp Init); Spd 50 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +2 Wis, +1 Monk); Atks +12/+7 melee (1d8+4, fist) SA Improved unarmed strike, flurry of blows; SD Deflect arrows; SQ Slow Fall 30ft, Unarmored Speed 40ft, Still Mind, Purity of Body, Improved trip, Wholeness of Body, Leap of the Clouds; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +8.

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12

*Skills*: Balance +14, Climb +9, Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +12, Hide +11, Jump +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Spot +8, Tumble +13; *Feats*: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Focus (fists), Specialisation (fists), Spring Attack.

Treasure : None

APL 8

Malgin of Veluna, male human, ex-Mnk9/Fgt4: CR13; medium-sized humanoid; HD 9d8+4d10+26; hp 86; Init.+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Imp Init); Spd 50 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +2 Wis, +1 Monk); Atks +13/+8 melee (1d10+5, fist) SA Improved unarmed strike, flurry of blows, improved trip; SD Deflect arrows, Evasion, Improved Evasion; SQ Slow Fall 50ft, Unarmored Speed 40ft, Still Mind, Purity of Body, Wholeness of Body, Leap of the Clouds; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +9.

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12

*Skills*: Balance +16, Climb +10, Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +15, Hide +13, Jump +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Spot +10, Tumble +15; *Feats*: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Focus (fists), Specialisation (fists), Spring Attack.

Treasure : None

### APL 2

**Katarina, female human Wiz 6:** CR6; mediumsized humanoid; HD 6d4+6; hp 26; Init.+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Imp Init); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 Mage Armor); Atks +3 melee (1d4 dagger), or +5 ranged (1d8 light crossbow); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5.

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 12

*Skills*: Bluff +2, Concentration +10, Disguise +2, Hide +5, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2, Move Silently +6, Ride +3, Scry +5, Spellcraft +2, Spot +5; *Feats*: Scribe Scroll, Improved Initiative, Combat Casting, Spell Focus (Evocation), Dodge.

Spells\* (4, 4, 4, 3): 0 Detect magic, Flare (x3); 1st-Expeditious retreat, Spider Climb; 2nd-

Invisibility, Melfs acid arrow (3 rounds of damage); 3rd-Sleet Storm, Fire Ball (6d6).

Precast and still active: Mage Armor, Shield, Invisibility, Protection form arrows 10/+2, Precast and gone: Spectral Hand and Fly

**Treasure:** 50pp, 100gp, dagger (2 gp), light crossbow (17gp), 8 bolts (5sp).

**Spellbook:** Containing the following spells. 0: All

1st: Change Self, Detect Secret Doors, Endure Elements, Expeditious retreat, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Shield, Spider Climb, Negative Energy Ray, Lesser Sonic Orb.

2nd: See Invisibility, Resist Elements, Flaming Sphere, Darkness, Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Protection from arrows, Melf Acid Arrow, Blur, Fox's Cunning.

3rd: Fly, Fireball, Sleet Storm, Lightning Bolt, Hold person, Nondetection.

### APL 4

Katarina, female human Wiz 6, Rog 2: CR8; medium-sized humanoid; HD 6d4+6+2d6+2; hp 34; Init.+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Imp Init); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 Mage Armor); Atks +5 melee (1d6 MW shortsword), or +6 ranged (1d8 light crossbow); SA spells, Sneak attack 1d6, SD Evasion; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +5.

Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 12

*Skills*: Bluff +4, Concentration +10, Disable Device +6, Disguise +8, Hide +13, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +13, Open Locks +6 Ride +3, Scry +5, Spellcraft +2, Spot +9; *Feats*: Scribe Scroll, Improved Initiative, Combat Casting, Spell Focus (Evocation), Dodge.

Spells\* (4, 4, 4, 3): 0 Detect magic, Flare (x3); 1st-Expeditious retreat, Spider Climb; 2nd-Invisibility, Melfs acid arrow (3 rounds of damage); 3rd-Sleet Storm, Fire Ball (6d6).

Precast and still active: Mage Armor, Shield, Invisibility, Protection form arrows 10/+2, Precast and gone: Spectral Hand and Fly

**Treasure:** 50pp, 100gp, Masterwork shortword (80 gp), light crossbow (17gp), 8 bolts (5sp). **Spellbook:** Containing the following spells. 0: All

1st: Change Self, Detect Secret Doors, Endure Elements, Expeditious retreat, Mage Armor,

Magic Missile, Shield, Spider Climb, Negative Energy Ray, Lesser Sonic Orb.

2nd: See Invisibility, Resist Elements, Flaming Sphere, Darkness, Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Protection from arrows, Melf Acid Arrow, Blur, Fox's Cunning.

3rd: Fly, Fireball, Sleet Storm, Lightning Bolt, Hold person, Nondetection.

### APL 6 and 8

Katarina, female human Wiz 6, Rog 4: CR10; medium-sized humanoid; HD 6d4+6+4d6+4; hp 44; Init.+7 (+3 Dex, +4 Imp Init); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 Mage Armor); Atks +7/+2 melee (1d6+1 Magical +1 shortsword), or +9/+4 ranged (1d6 short bow); SA spells, Sneak attack 2d6, SD Evasion, Uncanny Dodge (Dex to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +6.

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 12

*Skills*: Bluff +4, Concentration +10, Disable Device +11, Disguise +8, Hide +15, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +7, Move Silently +14, Open Locks +11, Pick Pockets +7, Ride +4, Scry +5, Spellcraft +2, Spot +9; *Feats*: Scribe Scroll, Improved Initiative, Combat Casting, Spell Focus (Evocation), Dodge, Mobility.

Spells\* (4, 4, 4, 3): 0 Detect magic, Flare (x3); 1st-Expeditious retreat, Spider Climb; 2nd-Invisibility, Melfs acid arrow (3 rounds of damage); 3rd-Sleet Storm, Fire Ball (6d6).

Precast and still active: Mage Armor, Shield, Invisibility, Protection form arrows 10/+2, Precast and gone: Spectral Hand and Fly

**Treasure:** 50pp, 100gp, 2 topaz worth 50gp each, Masterwork shortwsord (80 gp), shortbow (15gp), 10 arrows (5sp). **Spellbook:** Containing the following spells.

#### 0: All

1st: Change Self, Detect Secret Doors, Endure Elements, Expeditious retreat, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Shield, Spider Climb, Negative Energy Ray, Lesser Sonic Orb. 2nd: See Invisibility, Resist Elements, Flaming

Sphere, Darkness, Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Protection from arrows, Melf Acid Arrow, Blur, Fox's Cunning.

3rd: Fly, Fireball, Sleet Storm, Lightning Bolt, Hold person, Nondetection, Arcane Sight.

## Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus role-playing) to each character.

#### Successfully completing the scenario

APL2 150 xp; APL4 300 xp; APL6 450 xp; APL8 600 xp.

#### Total possible experience:

APL2 150 xp; APL4 300 xp; APL6 450 xp; APL8 600 xp.

## Treasure Summary

#### APL 2

50pp, 100gp, dagger (2 gp), light crossbow (17gp), 8 bolts (5sp).

**Spellbook:** Containing the following spells. 0: All

1st: Change Self, Detect Secret Doors, Endure Elements, Expeditious retreat, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Shield, Spider Climb, Negative Energy Ray, Lesser Sonic Orb.

2nd: See Invisibility, Resist Elements, Flaming Sphere, Darkness, Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Protection from arrows, Melf Acid Arrow, Blur, +1

3rd: Fly, Fireball, Sleet Storm, Lightning Bolt, Hold person, Nondetection.

#### APL 4

**Treasure:** 50pp, 100gp, Masterwork shortword (80 gp), light crossbow (17gp), 8 bolts (5sp).

**Spellbook:** Containing the following spells. 0: All

1st: Change Self, Detect Secret Doors, Endure Elements, Expeditious retreat, Mage Armor,

Magic Missile, Shield, Spider Climb, Negative Energy Ray, Lesser Sonic Orb.

2nd: See Invisibility, Resist Elements, Flaming Sphere, Darkness, Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Protection from arrows, Melf Acid Arrow, Blur, Fox's Cunning.
3rd: Fly, Fireball, Sleet Storm, Lightning Bolt, Hold person, Nondetection.

### APL 6 and 8

**Treasure:** 50pp, 100gp, 2 topaz worth 50gp each, Magical +1 shortword (1040 gp), shortbow (15gp), 10 arrows (5sp).

**Spellbook:** Containing the following spells. 0: All

1st: Change Self, Detect Secret Doors, Endure Elements, Expeditious retreat, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Shield, Spider Climb, Negative Energy Ray, Lesser Sonic Orb.
2nd: See Invisibility, Resist Elements, Flaming Sphere, Darkness, Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Protection from arrows, Melf Acid Arrow, Blur, Fox's Cunning.
3rd: Ely, Eireball, Sleet Storm, Lightning Bolt

3rd: Fly, Fireball, Sleet Storm, Lightning Bolt, Hold person, Nondetection, Arcane Sight.

## TREAUSRE MAXIMUMS PER PC FOR THIS EVENT

APL 2 100GP + Special Cert and spellbook.
APL 2 200GP + Special Cert and spellbook.
APL 2 300GP + Special Cert and spellbook.
APL 2 600GP + Special Cert and spellbook.

## Map 1 The Main Encounter

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- A: Location of the PCs/Paleen Rock
- B: Location of the Hand of Nerull
- C: Where Malgin Lands
- D: Boat
- E: Guards on Tower
- F: Boat

Note 1 square = 50ft

Appendix 1 The PlazaDerGoot

## **Description of the PlazaDerGoot (The Goat Market)**

In the days when the then town of Schwartzenbruin was contained completely upon it island and had not yet spread to the mainland, across the shore was a market. This market over time became called Plaza Der Goot, the Goat Market. This was because every year huge herds of goats were brought from all over the Quaglands for sale each autumn. This market in time turned into a small village and as the city continued to grow into the first mainland suburb of the City of Schwartzenbruin. Today the Plaza is a wealthy and vibrant section of the New City of Schwartzenbruin. Here can be found taverns, inns, gaming halls, whorehouses, merchant stores, bakeries and manufacturing. The plaza also fronts the infamous Warrens of Tilbet area of the new city. The Warren will be featured another time.

The following places of interest are located in the Plaza area.

- 1) Das Rund Huis: This formidable bastion serves not only as the main (ceremonial) gate into the new city, but also as the primary arsenal of the Auszug. Finally completed in 591 CY under construction management of the Stundelver clan, a respected Dwur clan form the Yatils, it was opened by the Voormann as the crowning jewel of his Auszug project. It has been designed to, if required, stand alone in the siege of the city. Its basements are said to run for several levels into the bedrock and contain a deep cistern of fresh water and massive storehouses for the Auszug. The garrison, handpicked from the 6<sup>th</sup> Auszugen numbers some 100 troops led by its veteran commander Hertarg WunderHaven (F12).
- 2) Der Aldboot: Schwartzenbruins largest tavern is also its most famous. Owns and run by the Pax Mecuri, it is the place where the majority of under the table recruiting of adventurers occurs in Perrenland. It is also an information gathering paradise, although watch what you ask as it may be worth a few gold to the right buyer as well. Der Aldboot has nearly 80 rooms for long term rent and several large dorms as well. Its three bars and two gaming rooms are supplemented by some of the cities most costly and exotic courtesans. Never a place for the faint hearted, its atmosphere is said to be at times challenging. The food here is second to none if you have the gold and many a successful adventuring party has blown substantial sums living it up in the best company that gold can buy.
- 3) DasZeeAcadamy: This is where, if you join the Zee-Auszug you get trained. This fortified complex also includes the docks directly below its outer gate. It also serves as a replenishment facility for the ships of the Pax and the Zee and there is some joint administration of both it and the granary and warehouse adjacent. The commander Edulf Reinhart (F7/R5Duel3) is a renowned swordsman and wit in the city.
- 4) **Der Schokoladehuis**: This is the famous establishment of Hans Mordenkainen, rumored to be the brother of the famous Mordenkainen himself. Here Hans produces the worlds only Schokolade, the most expense confectionery in the Flaneass.
- 5) Deaths Gate: This is the oldest fortification on the shore and serves now as a seldom-used gate for the New City. It is so named as for many generations it has served as the gate through which the hand of Nerull passes during the famous festival "The dance of Nerull", it is the only fortification in the new city that is garrisoned by the Bruinsgardt. Its commander Vigor DerHust (F11) is a person best avoided when he has had a few lagers at his haunt Der Aldboot
- 6) **Nerull's Ziggurat**: This ancient construction has always been associated with the god Nerull, the Paleen Rock and sacrifice. It is the location of the GrupDasZigguraten a strange hereditary group of Bruinsmenn chosen from a few select families who care-take the area and keep away the curious. More rumors surround this group and the Ziggurat than can possibly be true. Either way though everyone agrees that the group is very good at keeping people away.
- 7) **The Paleen Rock**: The location where the Kust are killed when they plummet upon it to their deaths during the Dance of Nerull.
- 8) The Offices of the Pax Mecuri: Want to hire a thousand troops for a campaign outside Perrenland go here. This is the administrative HQ of the Pax Mecuri. Here the Pax manages the accounts of its various clients. Dispatch riders and runners are constantly streaming to and from this establishment. Occasionally one of the Pax's more famous field commanders will wander in and leave with new orders and head to Der Aldboot to muster his company.

- **9) DerHorsStable:** Want to leave you mount somewhere safe, then leave it here. The Stables have a fine reputation and even the odd Paladins mount will have long term accommodation here. It does of course have the occasional mount for sale. Run by the redoubtable Franhe Doust (P7 Old Kerk), she charges a reasonable rate for the best of care.
- 10) Temple of the Old Kerk: This is but one of the temples of the Old Kerk in the new city, this particular one is dedicated to Zodal and serves as a small hospital for the Plaza area. Here some curing can be purchased for the right donation. It is overseen by Klenak Hausftmann (C9), a Bruinsmann, member of the Aid-Auszugen, and nicknamed Steady-Hand by the mercenaries who have been stitch up by him.
- 11) The Zee/Pax Granary and adjacent Warehouses: This walled compound serves as the primary supply base for the Pax Mecuri and the Zee-Auszug. It is well patrolled as shipments of quite valuable commodities often arrive for short-term storage here, a supplement to the coffers neither organisation knocks back.
- 12) The Docks of the Zee-Auszugen and the Pax: The place Pax and Zee ships are repaired and replenished.

### PLAYERS HANDOUT NUMBER 1

Today is the festival called "The Dance of Nerull" also known as "The Hands Dance", or simply the Dance. The Dance is one of Perrenlands oldest festivals and has been part of the cultural calendar of the city of Schwartzenbruin for longer than written records have been kept. The nature of the festival often leaves visitors to the country a little perplexed. How can a good society so openly celebrate a ritual to a god so dark and evil? In explanation, they mostly get simply a wry smile, a shake of the head, and comments like "Dumkoff Ootlanders".

The nature of the festival is thus. Every year on the last day of Coldeven one speaker from the Old Kerk is chosen by divine oracle to take on the mantle of an individual known as "The Hand of Nerull". Though the priest's identity is often known, everyone treats him or her as an anonymous person. In fact to be quite correct "if" the person needs to be referred to at all whilst acting as the "Hand" then said reference is as one who has departed to another place. It is not deemed appropriate or polite to ever reveal any knowledge that one knows whom was acting as the "Hand". This is because Nerull is the Flan god of Death, Darkness and Evil. Worship of him is considered heretical and diabolical in Perrenland, but the Old Kerk and indeed Perrenders in general still feel the need to placate him. This they do once a year with the Hands Dance.

The Hands Dance, is said to hearken back to the days of the Ur-Flanne, an ancient Flan empire of the Quaglands, and beyond. It is said that the Ur-Flanne held many dark gods in high honor and Nerull as one of their supreme gods, and they openly worshipped him. For the Ur-Flanne, according to Perrendland's intelligencia, had no sense of good or evil being barbaric and uncouth. Yet, some traditions are best not forgotten no matter how much time has passed, lest the dark god's fury be unleashed on this the coldest, darkest day of the year. The festival is based around the chosen "Hand of Nerull" performing the only duty that office holds within the Old Kerk. The singular duty of the office is the execution of Perrenlands most heinous criminals called the Kust. Kust is an old Flan word that roughly translates as both accursed and evil, and on this day they are condemned to hell.

The festival starts, as do most festivals with the donning of traditional costume, dance and a great deal of substance abuse. Everyone dresses for the occasion in long white shrouds, with leering skull masks. The fact that everyone has traditionally dressed incognito is said to have been the main cause over the centuries of the strengthening of Perrenlands old bloodlines with new blood, and couples locked together in wild embraces is not an uncommon sight on the streets of Schwartzenbruin during the festival. Some scholars, in fact, refer to the festival as being dualistic in that aspects of fertility and renewal are as prominent as aspects of passing and death. The quickening of many wombs and a high birth rate nine months after the festival seems to bear this out.

About mid-morning the Hand enters the city via the "Rund Huis" or main ceremonial gate with his grim procession of Kust guarded by the famous Bruinsgardt of Perrenland. Down the PlazDerGoot he will lead his flock make a turn past the Zee-Acadame onto Bakkerstrât. Here they will pass the famous drinking establishment Der Aldboot before going out through Deaths gate facing the lake. Along the beach the possession will go up the hill to Deaths Bluff the promontory that overlooks Bruinsbay. From here the Kust have one last journey to make, the plummet to the Paleen rock below.

The place of execution the "Paleen Rock" is a wide jagged lump of yellowish rock that rests below Deaths Bluff, the highest point on the cliffs of the city. The fall of exactly 237 feet onto the rock has never failed to kill one of the Kust, or indeed anyone else. From the cliff each of the Kust is led by the Hand of Nerull, cursed for their crimes for a final time and then thrown to their death with the cheers of the crowd. Below, the Hands Helpers bear witness to the executions. No one ever touches the Paleen Rock during this festival.

So, thousands of people from across Perrenland brave the cold weather and converge upon Schwartzenbruin filling its taverns, Clanhuis and inn's to the bursting point. Many also, who are more grim of mood, come to see justice done. This year the Dance is going to be especially important as the infamous rampager Malgan of Veluna is to be executed. This foreigner has been convicted by the highest court in the land, that of the Hand of Allitur, and condemned as Kust. His rampage of murder, rape and robbery through the Quaglands as far north as the city of Traft has affected many families. These families with their extended kin have converged upon Schwartzenbruin in numbers almost without precedent to see the Hand of Nerull perform his duty.

## PLAYERS HANDOUT NUMBER 2

### CONSEQUENCES OF BEING A HAND'S HELPER

- You cannot refuse to follow the Hand of Nerull or any direct instructions from him; you react automatically to commands, woodenly and with horror if you resist. Otherwise you may act, talk and respond normally.
- Your sight is altered in a dramatic way. When you look a people they have a halo of shimmering white energy around them, when you look at the Kust this energy is red in color, when you look at the Hand of Nerull or yourself or other helpers it is Black.
- Paladins, and PC with holy or divine abilities or items loose all their divine and holy abilities. Any holy item they use now gives then a negative level.
- Clerics loose all access to their normal domain spells and domain abilities including any memorized domain spells. These are replaced with the following spells until the end of the scenario, as well as the domain effects of the death domain. Replaced spells are replaced on a level for level basis; i.e. you must be able to cast a domain spell of the appropriate level in order to gain the replacement.

1st level spell: Cause Fear.2nd level spell: Death Knell.3rd level spell: Nondetection4th level spell: Confusion

